



CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

E. Denise Simmons
City Councillor

Mayor
2008-2009

August 27, 2015

Chairman Tom Wheeler
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization, WC Docket No. 11-42, Telecommunications Carriers Eligible for Universal Service Support, WC Docket No. 09-197, Connect America Fund, WC Docket No. 10-90

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

I am reaching out to strongly urge you to reconsider some of the changes currently under deliberation by the FCC as it seeks to modernize and revamp the Lifeline program. Over the past three decades, this program has proven to be a critical tool in helping seniors, low-income people, and homeless citizens stay in touch with relatives, healthcare providers and social service workers, and potential employers. The FCC has done a tremendous job in helming this program and keeping it viable throughout decades of explosive technological evolution and expansion, and it is imperative that the program remain affordable and easily accessible by the millions of residents who depend upon it as their lifeline to the outside world.

I am concerned about potential unintended consequences from the proposals the FCC is currently considering. While modernization of the program, particularly in terms of expanding access to broadband for low-income people, is necessary, I fear that doing so without increasing the revenue that supports this program could ultimately limit the number of people this program will be able to serve. I also fear that switching over to a voucher system, and taking decisions over program eligibility out of the hands of service providers and placing them in the hands of third parties could potential open the door to abuse of the system, additional barriers to entry, and greater numbers of people being unable to access this most important program. Ultimately, on behalf of my constituents, I urge you to exercise extreme caution in how you move forward with the plans to modernize Lifeline.

I thank you for your time and consideration to this matter, and please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

City Councillor E. Denise Simmons